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to be decided by a committee of its scientific experts and for the more eminent of these to receive salaries not smaller than that of the executive head.

Mr. Hughes has not pointed out, as an impartial judge might have done, that the two scientific appointments mentioned are the only ones in which the president is open to criticism, or that he is the first president who has officially asked the advice of scientific men on such points. At the meeting of the council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, held in Washington on April 22, 1913, shortly after President Wilson's installation, the following resolution, proposed by Mr. Cattell, was passed:

> WHEREAS, It is eminently desirable that scientific men especially skilled in their departments be appointed as heads of the scientific bureaus of the government, therefore,
>
> *Resolved,* That a committee of three be appointed to communicate to the President of the United States that it is the opinion of the council of the American Association for the Advancement of Science that a scientific man skilled in meteorology should be selected as the Chief of the Weather Bureau.

The committee waited on the president who requested the secretary of agriculture to consult with the committee of the association. The secretary of agriculture at that time stated that no appointment in the department of agriculture had been made or would be made for political reasons, or even be given to a man who sought the office. The committee of the American Association called the attention of the secretary to the fact that the National Academy of Sciences is by law the scientific adviser of the government, and the president, as far as we are aware for the first time since the law was enacted in 1863, asked the advice of the academy on an appointment. A committee of experts of the academy recommended three men skilled in meteorology and fitted for the office of chief of the weather bureau, and one of these was appointed by the president. In like manner the commissioner of fisheries was appointed from candidates proposed by the American Society of Naturalists and the American Zoological Society. In other cases President Wilson has asked and followed the advice of scientific bodies and scientific men, and his record in this respect is certainly better than that of any of his recent predecessors. We can only hope that he himself or Mr. Hughes, as the case may be, will still further improve this record in the course of the next four years.

A NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL

THE National Academy of Sciences has appointed, at the request of the president of the United States, an organizing committee to make recommendations concerning a national research council of the United States. This committee, which consists of George E. Hale, director of the Mt. Wilson Solar Observatory, chairman, Edwin G. Conklin, professor of zoology at Princeton University, Simon Flexner, director of the laboratories of the Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research, Robert A. Millikan, professor of physics in the University of Chicago, and Arthur A. Noyes, professor of chemistry in the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, have prepared a preliminary statement concerning the plans of the council.

Its purpose is to bring into cooperation existing governmental, educational, industrial and other research organizations, with the object of encouraging the investigation of natural phenomena, the increased use of scientific research in the development of American industries, the employment of scientific methods in strengthening the national defence, and such other applications of science as will promote the national security and welfare.

The council will be composed of leading American investigators and engineers, representing the army, navy, Smithsonian Institution and various scientific bureaus of the government; educational institutions and research endowments; and the research divisions of industrial and manufacturing establishments. Research committees of two classes will be appointed: central committees, representing various departments of science, comprised of leading authorities in each field, selected in consultation with the president of the corresponding national society; local committees in cooperating institutions engaged in research.

The following plan of procedure is proposed:

1. The preparation of a national inventory of equipment for research, of the men engaged in it, and of the lines of investigation pursued in cooperating government bureaus, educational institutions, research foundations and industrial research laboratories; this inventory to be prepared in harmony with any general plan adopted by the proposed government council of national defence.
2. The preparation of reports by special committees, suggesting important research problems and favorable opportunities for research in various departments of science.
3. The promotion of cooperation in research, with the object of securing increased efficiency; but with careful avoidance of any attempt at coercion or intereference with individual freedom and initiative.
4. Cooperation with educational institutions, by supporting their efforts to secure larger funds and more favorable conditions for the pursuit of research and the training of students in the methods and spirit of investigation.
5. Cooperation with research foundations and other agencies desiring to secure a more effective use of funds available for investigation.
6. The encouragement in cooperating laboratories of researches designed to strengthen the national defence and to render the United States independent of foreign sources of supply liable to be affected by war.

It is not clear why there should be a discrimination between educational institutions and research foundations, so that the former should be aided in securing larger funds and the latter in using their funds more effectively, and some scientific men may think it more desirable to cooperate with other nations in producing supplies where this can be done to the best advantage, rather than to prepare for war. The National Research Council should, however, be able to perform a useful service, more especially in directing public attention to the importance of scientific research for the welfare of the nation and of the world.

THE EPIDEMIC OF INFANTILE PARALYSIS

THERE have been in New York City up to August 20 about 7,000 cases of infantile paralysis and 1,600 deaths and the epidemic has spread to a serious extent in adjacent parts of the state and in New Jersey. The only alleviating circumstance in connection with this disease, which from its ill-understood origin and mode of transmission, produces in these days somewhat the same psychologic effects as smallpox and the plague in past days, is that thorough measures have been undertaken to check the disease and that these may be extended to other diseases which entail an even greater amount of suffering and death than poliomyelitis.

Efforts are also being made in many places to obtain scientific information concerning the disease. Thus at the suggestion of Dr. Haven Emerson, health commissioner of New York City, a conference took place at the College of Physicians and Surgeons, early in August, of which Dr. Simon Flexner was chosen as chairman. A committee was appointed to consider all the phases of laboratory investigation, to suggest subjects and in some instances lines of study in connection with the disease. This committee consists of Dr. Flexner, Professor Ludvig Hektoen, University of Chicago, Professor Hans Zinsser, College of Physicians and Surgeons, New York; Professor Richard M. Pearce, Jr., University of Pennsylvania; Professor James W. Jobling, Vanderbilt University; Surgeon George W. McCoy, director of the hygienic laboratory at Washington, and Dr. Theobald Smith, of the Rockefeller Institute. Another committee was appointed to consider practical measures